

PRINCETON

RECEIVED DEC 8 1945

The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August, and September, by St. Louis University. Subscription price: \$1.00 a Year.
Entered as second-class matter at St. Louis 3, Mo. Post-Office under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. 22

DECEMBER 1945

No. 3

Thesaurus Eloquentiae

BY CHARLES S. RAYMENT

University of Michigan

A point invariably touched upon in biographical sketches of Seneca the Elder is his extraordinary memory, to which he himself alludes in the preface to his first book of *Controversiae* (2). He states that as a youth he could recite a list of 2000 names in the order in which they had been given, and repeat in reverse order more than 200 lines of poetry, quoted individually and from different authors by his fellow pupils.

Unusual powers of a similar sort are among the talents which he ascribes to Porcius Latro (*Ibid.*, 17-18). That declaimer, Seneca declares, never needed to review his speeches in order to commit them to memory; though he composed rapidly, he learned by heart as he wrote. Latro was especially familiar with history, and, being given the name of any military leader, could detail that commander's campaigns in chronological sequence.

From this characterization Seneca digresses (*Ibid.*, 19) to remark that his sons (to whom his volume was dedicated) wonder unduly at such feats of memory, since within the space of a very few days anyone can learn to do what Cineas did, who, on being sent to Rome as Pyrrhus's ambassador, greeted by name all the senators and their retinues the day after his arrival; what an unnamed person did who claimed as his own a poem which he had heard recited by its author, and then proceeded to quote it from memory, though the writer himself could not; or what Hortensius did, who sat for an entire day at an auction and afterward rehearsed the list of objects, buyers, and prices, in the order of the sales, subjecting his accuracy to the test of the auctioneer's written records (an anecdote which appears also in Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 11.2.24). Seneca maintains that a skill which seems portentous can be communicated by training not at all arduous, but postpones to another occasion the exposition of that art.

It can only be conjectured what precepts he would have given, but the outline of a mnemonic system is provided by three other Latin writers. The earliest of these is the anonymous author of the rhetorical treatise *Ad Herennium*; Cicero in the *De Oratore* assigns a brief discourse on the subject to Antonius; Quintilian, who acknowledges his debt to Cicero, handles the same topic. Each has some general matter relating to the need for a system and its usefulness to the public speaker. The first discussion follows lines familiar in justifications of rhetorical studies; just as talent for speaking is pronounced indispensable, but in want of cultivation by formal training, so in regard to memory, though native endowment is admitted to be more valuable than acquired skill, yet the latter is termed a helpful adjunct

(*Ad Her.* 3.16.28-29; 21.34; 22.36; *De Or.* 2.87.355-357; *Inst. Or.* 11.2.1). Both Cicero (2.87.355) and Quintilian (11.2.2-3) dwell on the advantages to be derived from a good memory, and the *Ad Herennium* pays it a generous, even if cursory, tribute in terming it *thesaurum inventorum atque omnium partium rhetoricae custodem* (phrasing which Quintilian may have been echoing when he wrote *neque immerito thesaurus hic eloquentiae dicitur*). The need for practice is emphasized in all three accounts (*Ad Her.* 3.24.40; *De Or.* 2.87.357; *Inst. Or.* 11.2.36, 40).

As for method, Cicero sums up the principles of the ancient mnemonics admirably when he says that sensory impressions produce the greatest effect on the mind, that visual impressions are the keenest of all, especially if they are reinforced by the auditory and reflective, and that for concepts embodied in visual forms *sede opus est; etenim corpus intellegi sine loco non potest* (2.87.357-358). From the systematic employment of imagery and sequence we are enabled to grasp concepts and arrangement (*sententias imaginibus, ordinem locis comprehendamus*, 2.88.359). Before pursuing this generalization into details, it may be well to show its meaning by a simple example. The things which we wish to remember include single words, phrases, connected thoughts, and situations. Proper names, if they can be represented by visual images, are most easily recalled. Let us assume that we desire to fix the names Lyons, Crane, Frost, Baker, Pease, Wright, Flood, Parkes, and Lemon in that sequence. First we shall substitute the visual concept for the name, then localize each image in a familiar spot, such as a room of our house, having predetermined the number to be assigned to the respective room, and finally, by touring the places successively in memory, convert images back into names in the order desired. An effective comparison by the author of the *Ad Herennium* likens the places to wax tablets or paper, the images to letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images to writing, and the delivery of the speech to reading (2.17.30).

Quintilian, too, makes the division into images and places a basis for discussing principles. He relates imagery to association of ideas, which he regards as a valuable aid to recall and illustrates by the practice of shifting a ring to a different finger (or winding a string about the ring) in order to jog one's memory. In proper names, which may be coupled with famous people, friends, or acquaintances, or linked to origins in animal equivalents (Aper, Ursus), descriptive characteristics (Naso, Crispus), or other etymological derivations (Cicero, Verrius, Aurelius), he sees the best opportunity for such association (11.2.29-31). He points out the logic of employing familiar places to fix the order of ideas which we wish to recall; art, he says,

originated in experience, which teaches that when we return to a known spot, even after a considerable absence, we not only recognize the place, but are reminded of things we did there, people we met there, and thoughts we had there (11.2.17).

The specifications laid down for places and images (that order is followed by all three writers) are rather well agreed upon. In the *Ad Herennium*, temples, inter-columnar spaces, corners, and arches are recommended, though imaginary places are not ruled out (3.16.29). Quintilian suggests as especially appropriate a spacious house divided into a number of rooms, but admits that the system will work quite as effectively with public buildings, with spots visited in the course of a long journey or a walk around the city, or with pictures (11.2.18 and 21). Since in other respects the advice is not conflicting and the *Ad Herennium* provides the fullest statement, it will suffice to examine that version. The places ought to be arranged in a fixed order, so that the speaker can recall his images and elicit them at need, working either forward or backward. In order to bring to mind readily the number of places, each fifth should be marked by some such additional device as a gilded hand, and each tenth by the likeness of a person named Decimus who is well known to the orator (3.18.31). Many places should be chosen; they should be taken from an area not too crowded; they should differ from one another in form and type; they should be of moderate size and neither too famous nor too obscure; and they should be separated by distances not exceeding 300 feet (3.19.32). As for the images, they ought to resemble what they are designed to recall to memory, and likenesses should therefore be chosen from every conceivable source; these likenesses are two-fold, resemblances to objects or to words (3.20.33). Images should be of a sort likely to remain longest in the mind, hence not speechless or random in behavior, but engaged in some activity and unusually handsome, ugly, or ridiculous in appearance or dress (3.22.37).

Cicero, by the limits of his discussion, and Quintilian, by the tenor of his criticism, which I shall summarize later, seem to show that they regard verbal imagery, limited to single words, as the only field in which artificial memory is truly effective. Both writers mention substitution of species for class or part for whole, and Quintilian offers as examples the employment of spear for battle, and of anchor for ship. They likewise refer to suggestion of an entire thought by a single word, but draw no specific application; one might conclude that they had in mind the recall of a line of poetry from the opening word, or again that they were thinking of a key term which would evoke a situation or train of events (2.87.358; 11.2.29 and 19). Cicero adds to the varieties of verbal image words altered in case or inflection (*loc. cit.*).

The author of the *Ad Herennium* allots to mnemonics a much more comprehensive function, in which composite symbolism differentiates his approach from Cicero's and Quintilian's. He provides illustrations of both conceptual and verbal images from which, despite certain obstacles to a full understanding of the latter, one can deduce at least the general procedure. If we wish, he says, to remember that the accuser has charged our client with poisoning a man in order to obtain a

legacy, and that he has announced his intention of producing many witnesses familiar with these facts, we can stimulate our memory by conceiving a sick man lying in bed—preferably the deceased, if we know him; otherwise *aliquem aegrotum non de minimo loco*—, and the defendant standing by the bedside, holding in his right hand a goblet, in his left writing-tablets, and *medico* (sc. *digito*, by the third finger) *testiculos arietinos* (explained by commentators as meaning a bag made of such skin, often used as a purse for holding money; designed here, obviously, to suggest *testes*, witnesses). This image we shall put in the first place; others corresponding to further statements of the prosecutor we shall arrange in succeeding places, and thus be enabled, when we offer our rebuttal, to take up the charges in the proper sequence (3.20.33). The varied elements entering into this picture are a far cry from the single suggestive word. Literal imagery is effectively combined with symbolism of situation (the cup to represent poisoning, the tablets to represent the motive for murder) and with indirect verbal allusion to situation.

As an example of the more difficult thought imagery, the writer quotes a verse from a tragedy of Pacuvius: "Iam domuitionem (or domum itionem) reges Atridae parant." In one place we shall set Domitius lifting his hands to heaven as he is being flogged by the Reges (or reges) Marcii (or Martii); this will suggest *domum itionem reges*. In a second we shall put Aesopus and Cimber; the following text seems to refer to actors dressing for the roles of Agamemnon and Menelaus (thus recalling *Atridae parant*) in a play dealing with the sacrifice of Iphigenia (3.21.34). The references to Domitius and the Reges (or reges) Marcii (or Martii) have not been satisfactorily explained, but it seems likely that both are proper names referring to actual people; the cognomen Rex was not unusual, and inverted order is familiar. Some editors have raised a question as to why Domitius is to be represented with uplifted hands and as beaten with thongs, since *domum itionem* is suggested by *Domitium*, *reges* by the following term. Turnèbe attributes the addition to a desire to produce a more active and sense-stimulating imagery. It may not be entirely fantastic, though, to consider the possibility that *Marcii* was intended to suggest Marsyas, paradoxically become the exactor rather than the victim of punishment. Even when, as in this example, the aim is verbal recall, situation and action are the media employed. The verbatim re-creation of a complete unit of thought is patently more ambitious than the technique described by Cicero and Quintilian.

All the accounts regarding artificial memory recognize limits upon its effectiveness. The speaker in the *De Oratore* refers to adverbs and conjunctions (*verba, quae quasi articuli connectunt membra orationis*) which cannot be represented by any likenesses; for these, he declares, we must employ conventional symbols (2.88.359). The composer of the *Ad Herennium* shows more acuity, remarking that many Greek writers on the subject have made extensive lists of images to recall words; such lists he condemns on two grounds, first because of the difficulty occasioned by having to recollect the image which corresponds to the particular word, and secondly because symbols invented by others may not seem apt to the user (3.23.38). The most trenchant

criticism, however, comes from Quintilian, who terms the system useful for memorizing lists of names or of objects in a fixed sequence (11.2.23), but ascribes to it less value in learning a speech, inasmuch as thoughts do not call up the same objects as material things (11.2.24). Though touching, like Antonius, upon connectives incapable of representation by likenesses, he dwells longer upon the use of conventional images, which he calls a double burden upon the memory and an impediment to the flow of speech (11.2.25). Far better helps to memory, he asserts, are piecemeal learning of long passages (27), symbols marking transitions (28-29), perusal of one's own manuscript (32), correct division and artistic structure in the writing of one's speech (36), and assiduous practice and industry (40).

The information concerning aids to memory is less valuable as a program than as a disclosure of educational psychology in antiquity. Horace's *plagius Orbilius* has come to typify the Roman teacher, and when we think of memorizing we picture unhappy pupils laboring under threat of the rod. Yet these passages show that long before Quintilian's time the schools of rhetoric were putting their trust in sounder method. The emphasis on association of ideas is basic to the system; the power of the visual image is recognized; pertinent facts of a situation are grouped under a composite symbolism; the concrete, so far as may be, is substituted for the abstract. Such doctrine is still valid today. The employment of places which, however familiar, must rarely have had any direct connection with the act or event or word designed to be recalled, may seem an arbitrary way of determining sequence, but it is hard to think of a workable alternative. Provided that tasks beyond its powers were not put upon it, the scheme which I have summarized must have demonstrated incontestable merit.

Antigone's Lament

BY JOSEPH F. SCHARF, S.J.
West Baden College

Since not for children's sake would I, their mother,
Nor for my husband, slain and mouldering there,
Have travelled thus, doing despite to Thebes.
According to what law do I speak thus?
One husband slain, another might have been,
And children from another, losing this;
But, father and mother buried out of sight,
There can be born no brother anymore.
Such was the law whereby I held thee first
In honour.¹

In discussing Antigone's Lament, some editors are inclined to view the passage (905-912) as spurious, not on any manuscript evidence, but solely because it seems to them inconsistent with the character of Antigone. In his edition of the play Sir Richard Jebb argues for the rejection of the passage and uses as his most convincing argument a destructive logical analysis. With such treatment the passage can be made to appear ridiculous. Yet these lines must not be taken as a logical expression of Antigone's thought or motives. They are rather a pathetic utterance of her love for Polynices, flowing from a soul overwhelmed with emotion. Jebb, I believe, errs in insisting on this passage, not as an

expression of Antigone's love for her brother, but as a cold, clear declaration of her motive in burying him. Obviously, if so considered, the passage does contradict the reasons Antigone previously advanced for her action (450-470), namely, the unwritten and unfailing laws of heaven.

Dindorf and Humphrey, in their editions of the *Antigone*, side with Jebb in denying the authenticity of the passage. According to Pearson, in his *Sophocles Fabulae*, the first to cast suspicion on these lines was A. Jacob, in his *Quaest. Soph.*, 1821.

Gilbert Norwood, however, in his excellent work on tragedy, defends the passage most capably and convincingly. In his criticism, which is directed specifically against Jebb, he notes that the passage from *Antigone* was quoted by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. This would make it most likely that the "poet's own" words were used, and that the passage could not have been inserted later. Professor Norwood goes on to explain that the playwright does not necessarily portray strict logic or even the logic that he himself would use in his emotionally calm moments. In real life there are illogical persons, especially at times when stress heightens their feelings. If a dramatist is to portray life with its reality, he must portray some of life's illogicality. Antigone's reason is illogical, but it is dramatic and follows the "logic of the heart" (*Greek Tragedy*, p. 139).

M. L. D'Ooge, while not rejecting the lines as spurious, says that they may be considered by some as a regrettable lapse on the part of Sophocles into a sophistical vein of argument quite unbefitting his tragedy.² Yet it seems to me that if the lines in question be examined in the light of Antigone's mental and emotional state during the Lament, they may be understood in a way which not only agrees with Antigone's character, but also affords excellent proof of Sophocles' exceptional insight into human nature.

It must be noted that the chief characteristic of Sophocles' Antigone is her deep love for Polynices. It is the mainspring of her actions; and it is precisely this love for Polynices that is strongly brought out in this disputed passage. Sophocles here presents Antigone for the last time before she makes her way to the tomb; under the influence of strong emotion, she strives to say once more that which must be finally said before she quits the scene, that is, how strong her love is for her brother. This point is essential to the understanding of the entire tragedy, and to Sophocles the stressing of it was a dramatic necessity.

That the manner in which Antigone expresses her love is unnatural and inconsistent with her character is not at all evident. She speaks in passion, wildly and at random. The chorus hastens to remark upon Antigone's highly excited emotional state (928-930):

Stormily still o'er the soul of the maiden
The self-same gusts of passion sweep.³

Her words are perhaps repugnant to sane reason and calm judgment, but it is not sane reason nor calm judgment that has given them birth. We understand that she cannot mean what she says. But from her com-

(Continued on page 20)

¹ *Ten Greek Plays. Antigone*, tr. by Robert Whitelaw. New York, Oxford University Press, 1929. P. 77.

² M. L. D'Ooge, *Sophocles Antigone*. Boston, Ginn and Co., 1888. P. 110. ³ *Ten Greek Plays*. P. 77.

The Classical Bulletin

EDITOR

Richard E. Arnold, S. J.

St. Louis University, St. Louis 3, Mo.

Associate Editor Francis A. Preuss, S.J.

St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Mo.

Business Manager Kenneth E. Killoren, S.J.

St. Louis University

Vol. 22

DECEMBER 1945

No. 3

AD DIEM NATALEM

PRINCIPI PACIS

SIT GLORIA

HOMINIBUS BONAE VOLUNTATIS

PAX

"... Unde fidei nostrae inspectioni manifestissime patet, quia Dominus noster Jesus Christus, cum venit, potissimum pacem ideo mundo reddidit, ut sui praedicatores per orbem liberam intrandi viam haberent, et pace recepta mundus tranquillus verbum praedicationis intenderet. Hinc igitur est, quod in omnem terram sonus apostolorum exisse legitur (*Rom.* 10.18), et in fines orbis terrae verbum praedicationis cucurrisse monstratur. Deinde super omnia idcirco factum ostenditur, ut ille advenisse solidius firmaretur, qui, sicut quidam maximus poeta (*Virg.*) cecinerat:

Pacatum regit patriis virtutibus orbem.
Ille Deum vitam accipiet, divisque videbit
Permistos heroas et ipse videbitur illis;

et:

Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

Tum igitur vere terra soluta est ab omni bellorum formidine, velut idem testatur, quando:

Jam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto;

et:

Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo;

et:

... Toto surgit gens aurea mundo.

Haec nimirum poeta summus Octaviano principi scribens, quia levis eum spiritus flaverat aurae, et Sybillino carmine divinum aliquid interius, etsi nescius, suo praemonstrabat eloquio. Unde inquit:

Ultima Cumaei venit jam carminis aetas,
scilicet quidquid olim praedixerant Syillae, quod jam totum illo in tempore compleretur. Quia sicut suo in loco monstrabitur, mirabiliter velut organo, his usus Spiritus divinus, ut pene omnia quae de Christo sunt adimpleta, suo carmine longe antea praenotarent. . . . Quis autem sit qui natus est, primum requiratur Isaia propheta, et dicat quod qui natus est, sit magni consilii angelus, appelleturque Fortis et Dominator, Pater futuri saeculi et Princeps pacis (*Isa.* 9.6): hic Jesus, quem Angelus signanter annuntiat Filium Altissimi, et prophetarum eloquia futurum nominant Salvatorem.

The staff of THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN wishes all its readers and friends a Christmas blessed with the gifts of the Prince of Peace.

The above Latin quotation is from the pen of St. Paschasius Radbertus, a Benedictine Abbot of the ninth century.

This Christmas finds peace restored to the major part of the world; and men again can take up peace-time pursuits which look to the development of men *as men*, with their cultural potentialities. After these years in which almost our whole civilization was geared for the production of fighting men and machines, we hope that the classics will again be permitted to take their rightful and necessary place in the development of our younger generation, our future *men* and citizens.

Antigone's Lament

(Continued from page 19)

parison, harsh as it is, we do come to realize how deeply she loves her brother; and that, almost alone, matters in the Lament, and is of very great importance in the tragedy as a whole.

Her arguments in justification of herself may be sophistical; but that is of little consequence. Sophistical or not, Antigone does not cease to be most natural. Is it not natural that she encourage herself to die bravely by resorting to this last justification, no matter how unreasonable? She has done her duty in resisting Creon, has she not? Any random reason to support that conviction is reason enough for her, and gives her strength.

That it is natural for a noble nature, oppressed by intense emotion, to steady itself in its resolves by even a random excuse, appears more clearly from a passage in Homer. In the *Iliad*, 24.592-595, Achilles is moved to pity for Priam because of his great loss, a loss which he himself can understand and appreciate since the death of Patroclus. In noble generosity he lifts the body of Hector from the dust, has it washed and anointed and placed upon a bier that Priam may take it to Troy. This is precisely what he has promised Patroclus that he would not do. And how does Achilles justify himself? "Not unseemly," he says, "is the ransom he has given me; and you shall have a share, Patroclus, in these spoils." These words have been seized upon as an indication of a cold, ungenerous, grasping character. Further thought, however, will reveal clearly that Achilles is really and solely motivated by pity for the aged Priam. He has conquered at last his own wrathful desires, and out of pity for the suppliant ruler has broken his promise not to allow the burial of Hector's body. His excuse, "Be not wroth, Patroclus, because I will render thee thy due out of the ransom," is purely an extraneous one, intended to bolster himself in his noble purpose, rather than to indicate his true motive. It is like the Lament of Antigone in this, that it cannot stand exact interpretation and logical analysis, for human nature in an emotional crisis is often not logical. As Professor B. L. Ullman, of the University of Chicago, in his presidential address to the American Philological Society in New York, justly remarked:⁴ "The application of logic to philological investigation is a highly desirable procedure, but a bit of the *aurea mediocritas* is necessary in dealing with poetry. Here the psychological approach is sometimes better. . . ."

⁴ *Classical Journal* 31.403.

Progressive Education's Bottle-neck

By A. M. WITHERS

Concord College, Athens, W. Va.

When Byron wrote "Eternal Spirit of the Chainless Mind," he was unconsciously thinking, no doubt, of the untrammelled freedom of his own powers of imagination. Possibly he did not at the moment connect such liberty with the absence of close-in barriers to his personal language-horizon. But he almost certainly would have done so if he had been in the midst of the American 'Progressive Education' movement, and beheld the results therefrom upon American speech.

Likewise, if Tennyson dwelt among us now, in the guise, let us say, of a middle-aged professor who had carefully observed his fellow mortals during the last twenty or thirty years, and noted how language learning has fallen, he might, without questioning the ultimate reality of an 'increasing purposé,' or losing utterly faith that "the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns," nevertheless conclude that civilization may have periods of unmistakable stagnation and relapse.

It is trite to say that man's thinking and language power are closely connected, but not altogether commonplace, I believe, to remind those of our countrymen who are concerned with education that there is little of this power abroad in the land today.

What, for example, is the language equipment of the typical high-school student let loose upon the colleges? What sort of linguistic discipline has been his?

He may have exposed himself, half-heartedly, to a certain amount of Latin, more or less denatured to make it palatable to the greatest number, and to prevent, as far as possible, its disturbing intrusion upon time wanted for more spectacular subjects. Perhaps, either of his own volition and with his assumed insight, or impelled by 'expert' advice, he shunned Latin altogether, or substituted therefor a smattering of French or Spanish. His general language training in any event was a sort of incidental thing, less important in his mind (with the consent and encouragement of his linguistically undistinguished counselors) than 'leadership' programs and projects, laugh-producing theatricals, band practice, athletics, clubs, and what not. The result: young men and women fundamentally unschooled in the most important matter relating to foundations for the future acquirement of knowledge, and for freedom of contact with minds at least partially delivered from chains by reasonable possession of the vehicles of thinking.

These young men and women, very largely as a direct consequence of their linguistic unsubstantiality, carry into college fields, and into life, a passive intellectual attitude toward other forms of learning, waiting for instruction to be poured into them, very much in the manner of fledgling birds, though without the real and salutary hunger of these. We in the colleges are constantly confronted by the sorry spectacle of students blaming their former teachers for their own lack of accomplishment, instead of being permeated with habits of perennial personal industry and an abiding sense of personal responsibility.

Students sometimes surprise by the agility with which

they 'get around,' in spite of all language handicaps, among the involved terms in Medicine, Law, Biology, or Chemistry. But this merely demonstrates the ability of basically strong young minds to clear hurdles on the path to strictly vocational goals. Unfortunately for them and for us, they become fit companions only for their restricted kind, and tend to remain in given intellectual ruts for the full course of their lives.

Our American public is leaning more and more upon the mushrooming 'Digests,' which, catering to mass patronage, select preferentially the (often misleading) sensational, feature a below-par type of exposition and language, flatter, in a word, desires for mediocrity. In the schools the Latin texts have come to be provided with ubiquitous pictures to dazzle and conquer for the moment unwary interests; or maybe the walls of the classrooms have been overspread with Roman 'atmosphere' for the same juvenile and uncertain purposes. English-Latin 'word studies' are sprinkled on in a desperate, too-little-too-late effort to make up for the effective absorptive processes inherent in genuine hard-driven Latin study. Many modern-foreign-language textbooks offer simplified (or fool-proof) vocabularies in a fruitless effort to lure the fainthearted by painless degrees deeper into the real essentials of foreign-language experience. Appeasement goes so far that some learned professors actually have called in that last word in simplification, Basic English, to teach our adult students their own native tongue. Not even Law professors in Yale and Harvard can address classes with conviction that their members have a common body of language understanding whereby to assimilate as a group the refinements of legal discussion.

I began thinking the other day that a certain speaker I had just heard was 'vainglorious,' and it immediately occurred to me to wonder to how many people of my acquaintance I could venture to use that word with the expectation of being nicely understood. I am confident that on most A.B. and B.S. ears it would fall flatly and unprofitably. The radio announcer the other day read 'embattered Vilna' from his script, evidently because he knew not 'embattled,' and thought that he was duly correcting an error. Recently, in a spirit of playfulness, I told a student that she was 'a welcome encumbrance' in the class. Noting that her replying look betrayed nothing at all, I went on to find out if she really knew 'encumbrance.' She did not; nor did more than one out of ten of a class of high-school graduates sounded on the word. I have had an abundance of temporarily amazing experiences in my investigations of the shallows of word-consciousness among college students, until now I find myself surprised at no possible display of word-innocence. And I am actually afraid to experiment on the state in this regard of the younger teacher-population, including the Ph.D.'s who have grown to manhood and womanhood since 1920, because I hope against hope to maintain some faith in general American education outside the purely scientific and mechanical.

It is plainly not necessary for all people claiming culture to be professors of Latin, to be able to quote glibly from its literature, or to spend what might be for many seekers of culture (since culture is various) too many years on this one phase of general education. But

the only sensible course, for those who foresee benefit from Latin in their personal life and work, is to enter upon it at a fairly early stage, study it with the diligence which duty imposes, and leave it only when some strong, inside knowledge of it has been achieved. The student of Latin comes under the spell of some of the best intellects of the centuries, is introduced in intellectually stimulating ways to history and philosophy, and above all lays foundations wide and deep for English and the great modern languages of the allied Latin family.

Whatever virtues may be discoverable in some of the ideas and accomplishments of the 'progressivists,' it remains true that they have labored to promote their general and specific plans at the expense of the soundness and sufficiency of our national language and that they have thus created a 'bottle-neck' which is rendering increasingly difficult all educational advance.

Homer, Pindar, Literature—and War

By JAMES A. KLEIST, S.J.
Saint Louis University

In a lecture delivered last May before the Second Classical Conference of Cornell College, it was a happy thought of Professor C. C. Mierow, of Carleton College, to develop the idea that "the most direct way to restore the humane after the barbarities of war is through access to the fountainheads of our culture." The program of that meeting called for a panel discussion of the most effective way of dealing with veterans who are expected to flock to our schools and colleges in order to finish their education. It remains to be seen whether a large number of ex-service men will have any desire at all to turn to the Greek and Roman classics for help in solving the problems with which the war has brought them face to face. There are even now indications that this number will be exceedingly small. But, be this as it may, the classics teachers have but one answer to offer—the classics pure and undefiled.

The discipline of the classics is a straight road to culture—that is the gist of the Law and the Prophets, so far as classicists are concerned. Can any doubt of this maxim ever arise in the mind of a classics teacher? Indeed, since the answer is obvious, one has reason to wonder why in classical conventions during the war so much valuable time was set aside for discussing ways and means of meeting the problems of veterans who wished to finish their education. If, before the war, the classical germ was judged potent enough to kill any infection ruinous to liberal culture, what has happened to our men in the service that we should suppose them to be allergic to the germ now? When a physician notices that a dose of digitalis is not strong enough to tide a weakened patient over the crisis, he simply prescribes a double dose. This, surely, is the ordinary procedure. If, then, our veterans are 'different' from what they were before they left the happy environment of home life to go abroad and taste the full, sickening brutalities of war, this 'difference' in their condition can only be such as to necessitate a double dose of our own well-tried digitalis—the spirit of the ancient classics.

It was well, therefore, that Raphael C. McCarthy, S. J., head of the Saint Louis University Veterans' Bu-

reau and an acknowledged authority on post-war emotional reconversion, in a conference sponsored by the Society of Mental Hygiene and the Saint Louis Planning Council, praised "the role of colleges and universities in handling our veterans *without lowering their educational standards*."¹ And, in fact, which of us, if he were a veteran, would wish to be handled as a molly-coddle requiring a softer treatment than is accorded the average normal man?

But to return to Professor Mierow's statement quoted above: the mention of 'education' and of 'the humane' cannot but remind us of the old Greeks. The whole course of Greek literature shows that the Greeks as a race were engrossed in the subject of *paideia*, and that they were indefatigable in their quest of the humane. Homer, in particular, was regarded as "the educator of Hellas," and the traces of his immense influence—"the morsels from his banquet"—can be discovered down through the whole line of the writers of Greek prose and poetry. Now, then, if the Greeks themselves could see "the beacon-flame" of liberal culture in the study and teaching of their literature, can we, the professional expounders of the Greek mind, fail to see it?

This awareness of the Greeks of the educational power of their literature is strikingly illustrated in Pindar's *Fourth Isthmian*, where he takes occasion to speak of Ajax's "sturdy frame which, in the depth of night, he pierced and stained with gore by falling on his sword. He was a cause of shame for all the Grecian youth that went to Troy," which meant, no doubt,² that the Greeks before Troy had cause to be ashamed of their mistreatment of this gallant warrior. This thought would seem most unlikely to furnish an occasion to extoll the spirit and power of Greek literature as a medium of education. It would seem so to us; but with Pindar all things are possible. For the Theban Eagle it was a simple non-stop flight from Ajax to Homer and from both to literature. Something like this is what he says:³

But Homer, mark!
once for all has honored him
wherever men are found;
he reared a monument
to his consummate excellence,
and set it forth,
in verses, line by line, inspired,
to ease the task for other bards.⁴
Yes, that creeps on,
immortal, musical,
which any man has well expressed;
throughout the fruit-abounding earth,
across the sea,
it firmly treads its path—
a sun ray shed on noble deeds,
unquenchable for evermore.

Strophe Three of the *Fourth Isthmian* is but one of the numerous expressions of that veneration which the Greeks generally felt for Homer. Coming from one who was in his own right a poet of the first magnitude, it is full of significance. What I wish to stress here, however, is the fact, quite incidental to the main theme of the Ode, that Pindar's appraisal of Homer is, in reality,

¹ The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 11, 1945.

² See U. von Wilamowitz, *Pindaros*, p. 339; also Lewis Richard Farnell, *The Works of Pindar*, Translation and Commentary, p. 259. ³ This is an attempt at presenting Pindar in *rhythmical prose*. *Fourth Isthmian*, Strophe 3. ⁴ The Greek here is very obscure; but see Wilamowitz and Farnell, *loc. cit.*

a definition, valid for all time, of the nature and power of literature pure and undefiled. Literature at its highest welds into one harmonious whole noble thought and beautiful diction, "noble deeds which any man has well expressed"; it is "musical and immortal"; it "creeps on and on," slowly but surely, till all the world, "throughout the fruit-abounding earth and across the sea," has come to absorb its message and heard of the outstanding valor which the poet praises; for, as Pindar says in the *Fifth Isthmian*,

Two things alone, assuredly,
are shepherding the coveted success of life
along the flowery path of happiness:
if one does splendid work
and has his praises sung.

Such literature is "a sun ray shed on noble deeds, unquenchable for evermore." The more than two thousand years since Pindar have proved him to be in the right. "Nihil est enim aliud," says Cicero in his *Orator* (227), "pulchre et oratorie dicere nisi optimis sentiis verbisque lectissimis dicere."

What is true of Greek literature holds good of Latin, but perhaps in a lesser degree. Deeply understood in their import and enthusiastically brought home to modern boys and girls, the Greek and Roman classics are, by content and by form, "the most direct way" to teach "the humane" or else "to restore" it when it has been lost. Here we have the value of a classical education in a nutshell, a programme based on the very nature of man and independent of accidental circumstances. How astonished the Greeks would have been to hear that there are those nowadays who have one curriculum for the time of peace and another intended to meet post-war conditions! It may, of course, happen that lack of time and personal taste must be allowed for in shaping the curriculum best suited to veterans; but does this mean that therefore the training of these men must cease to be liberal? Whether we have veterans in our classroom or not, what is wanted is Latin and Greek, and plenty of it, taught more understandingly and more in sympathy with the conditions of present-day life than has ever been done before. In plain words, it is "the double dose" that must do the work now that veterans come to us to finish their education. Consequently, if post-war conditions demand a shift or 'revision' of something, this something can only be our own point of view, and not the curriculum.

If the classics mean anything to us at all, their teaching must enable us to help our students to build up well-rounded personalities, as far as that is possible within the short time they are under our care. As teachers of the classics, we are supposed to know what is right, and what is wrong, in education. Let us be leaders and guides to those who do not know it. "Men of aim," says Emerson,⁵ "must lead the aimless; men of invention the uninventive."

Idem itaque in omnibus consiliis rebusque faciamus, quod solemus facere, quotiens ad institorem alicuius mercis accessimus; videamus, hoc quod concupiscimus, quanti deferatur. Saepe maximum pretium est, pro quo nullum datur. Multa possum tibi ostendere, quae adquisita acceptaque libertatem nobis extorserint; nostri essemus, si ista nostra non essent. . . . Qui se habet, nihil perdidit. Sed quoto cuique habere se contigit?—Seneca, *Epp. Mor.* 42.

⁵ *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, "Aristocracy." New York, Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1926. P. 39.

Inconsistencies in the Iliad

BY PATRICK A. SULLIVAN, S.J.

Weston College, Weston, Massachusetts

A survey of the main features of the *Iliad* forces the reader to admit that there is a leading idea or motif running through the entire poem. This motif is 'the wrath of Achilles' and its disastrous consequences. In this main outline the *Iliad* is a strictly unified poem. However, when we consider the innumerable details and episodes incidental to the great war, we find contradictions and inconsistencies in the narrative, so many, in fact, that some scholars seize upon them as their first argument against the notion of one author of the *Iliad*.

The aim of this brief paper is to explain the inconsistencies in such a way as to make them ineffective as valid arguments against the single authorship. There are three possible ways of accounting for an inconsistency. In the first place, it may be due to the nature of oral poetry,¹ which requires a quite extraordinary memory. In reciting a long poem, a rhapsodist may very well make a mistake and contradict something he had related hours or days before. In fact, perfect consistency in such a case would border on the miraculous. Secondly, an inconsistency may be due to the very nature of poetry, which, after all, does not demand the exact logical processes we expect in writers on historical or philosophical subjects.² Finally, it may be due to a poet's deliberate choice, as when he allows an inconsistency to creep in because it enhances the narrative.³ This last-named reason seems to me to be a possible explanation of almost every inconsistency in the *Iliad*.

One frequently finds in the *Iliad* a disregard for the topographical features of the battle scenes, which causes a certain amount of confusion in the mind of a careful reader. The river Xanthus appears in some battles and is forgotten in others (2; 4; 6). The Greek wall has only one gate, yet many gates are attacked by the Trojans (7.438f.). The distance between the Greek camp and Troy is long in five places in the poem, but extremely short in seven.⁴ A moment's thought will suggest that the poet could easily have permitted these contradictory statements for a poetical purpose. He is describing a series of battles on the Trojan plain. He has before his eyes the ebb and flow of the battle, the attack and the repulse of Greek and Trojan, the advance and retreat of charioteer and footman, and, in fact, all the confusion of a ferocious melee. The excitement of the battle, the glory of war, and the courage of the warriors are the primary emotions he wishes to depict and emphasize. The actual topography is a minor concern. The distance, the number of gates, or the existence of a river are subsidiary matters that can be changed by the poet as often as a change will help to intensify the appeal of each conflict. If the presence of a river will deepen the color of the picture as a whole, it will be there; otherwise, it can be omitted. Exactness must

¹ H. Munro Chadwick and N. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*. Macmillan, 1936. Vol. 2, p. 245f. ² E. Drerup, *Das Homerproblem in der Gegenwart*. Würzburg, Becker, 1921. P. 338. ³ B. E. Perry, "The Early Greek Capacity of Viewing Things Separately." *TAPA* 68 (1937). 403. ⁴ T. D. Seymour, *Life in the Homeric Age*. Macmillan, 1907. P. 600f.

often yield to a poetical purpose.⁵

Homer sometimes relates an event in a certain scene in the poem, and then, forgetting that he has related it, contradicts his narrative in a later scene. Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Diomedes are seriously wounded, yet two days later they are in perfect health without the slightest indication that they have been wounded (11.248-254; 11.433-488, 368-400; 16.23-29). Book IX describes the visit and plea of the embassy to Achilles, yet subsequent events seem to imply that the embassy never approached the hero (9.182-668). Thetis informs Achilles that the gods have already departed with Zeus for Ethiopia and will remain there for eleven days. But it is soon evident that the gods cannot have been in Ethiopia (1.423-424, 194-195).

Homer represents Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Diomedes in perfect health in Book XXIII because he wants the heroes to appear in the games. Just as their wounding and departure served the poetical purpose of allowing the heroic Hector to take the center of the stage, so now their perfect health is essential for the emotional value of this book. Would not the interest of the games have been seriously weakened by the absence of the great heroes from the athletic contest? To a Greek audience combatants of the ordinary stamp would not have had the same appeal. The poet, therefore, felt justified, even if he thought of it at the time, in permitting the incongruity.⁶

The embassy scene is so striking in itself that its poetic appeal is a sufficient motive for its existence. The poet omits reference to it in certain contexts of the later books where mention of it might be expected. In Book XI Achilles informs Patroclus that now the Greeks will send an embassy to him because they need his help (11.608-610). In Book XVI Achilles appears to have been offered neither gifts nor the daughter of Briseis (16.49-60, 85-89), and some authors⁷ believe the embassy scene to be an interpolation for just that reason. Yet to the poet's mind the magnificent scene is important, because it depicts the tragic greatness of Achilles, his hospitality, his love for Patroclus, the intensity of his anger, and the pathos of his position. And furthermore, it shows oratorical skill, and even brilliance, at its best in the persons of Odysseus and Phoenix. What Greek would like to miss such an exhibition? Finally, it puts the finishing touch to a superb work of art by portraying the haughty refusal of stubborn Achilles, and the consequent distress of the ambassadors. Briefly, the poet painted the scene because of its inherent beauty, and its artistic treatment justifies its existence. Bowra⁸ and Bassett⁹ agree that Homer often devotes his attention to the perfection of parts rather than to the integrity of the whole. Later in the poem he deliberately omits reference to it in passages where he is at pains to represent Achilles as wronged by the Greeks. Would not any mention of the embassy there spoil that impression?

⁵ Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.16, 112, 186; Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 20.55; *Purgatorio*, Canto 22.113, for similar examples. ⁶ J. A. Scott, *Homer and His Influence*. University of California, 1921. P. 161. ⁷ W. Leaf, *Companion to the Iliad*. London, 1892. P. 170, 171, 212, 24. G. Grote, *Greece*. New York. Vol. 2, p. 183. ⁸ C. M. Bowra, *Tradition and Design in the Iliad*. Oxford, 1930. P. 112. ⁹ S. E. Bassett, "Homer," *Harvard University Studies* 30 (1920). 39-53.

Finally, the presence of Apollo in the scene describing the plague in Book I is essential to the story. He therefore had no scruple in allowing this presence to be inconsistent with the statement of Thetis that all the gods had repaired to Ethiopia.

Whatever explanation is adopted to account for Homer's inconsistencies, their presence does not necessarily militate against the single authorship of the *Iliad*. If a Vergil, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Dickens, a Cervantes permitted such incongruities in their written works, a Homer may be forgiven such 'blemishes' in a poem destined for oral delivery. They serve a highly poetical purpose. An epic poet would be a pedant if he let himself be exclusively absorbed by the logical coherence of the story he tells. He is also concerned about artistry in the manner of telling it. To achieve this purpose no poet of note will recoil from an occasional inconsistency in some detail if it adds to the beauty and interest of the whole.

Homer's inconsistencies, when weighed in the balance of artistic presentation, add considerably to his poetical stature. They certainly do not disprove him to be a poet of outstanding excellence.

Many teachers of Latin will be glad to know that "Aids for the Rhythmic Reading of Virgil" (30th thousand) and "Some Aids to Latin Composition" (4th ed.), two four-page leaflets by O. J. Kuhnmuensch, S. J., St. Louis University, may be obtained through CB. (5c each; 4c each in quantities of 25 or more.)

Saint Louis University and the CLASSICS

Saint Louis University has believed in classical education since its inception as a secondary school in 1818.

Its Department of Classical Languages is fully sympathetic with the great tradition and convinced of the place of the classics in our changing world.

Its ideals envision a combination of the best objectives of modern classical research, along with the timeless aims of genuinely humane education.

Its courses in classical languages look to the needs and interests both of students in the undergraduate schools and of specialists-in-training in the graduate school.

